




Krishna's Earthly Paradise

Two Shrine Hangings from H. Peter Stern



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Krishna's Earthly Paradise

Two Shrine Hangings from H. Peter Stern



Darielle Mason and Neeraja Poddar

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART



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Pages 3 and 4: Details of *Annakuta Festival and Gopala (Cowherd) Krishna Pichhwai* (page 23)

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FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This slender volume, published on the occasion of the reopening of our galleries of South Asian art after several years of renovations, celebrates the donation to the Philadelphia Museum of Art of two remarkable Indian shrine hangings, called *pichhwais*, from the collector and philanthropist H. Peter Stern. It is, by any measure, a remarkable gift, not only because of the aesthetic and historical significance of the works, but also because they were given to the Museum by Mr. Stern on the occasion of his marriage to Helen Williams Drutt English in 2007 and in honor of Stella Kramrisch, the Museum's legendary curator of Indian art. The addition of these two masterpieces to our collection of Indian art—one of the finest of its type in the country—further broadens our knowledge and appreciation of the rich culture and artistic heritage of India.

Connoisseurs, collectors, and passionate advocates for the art of our own time: These are but a few of the many attributes that describe Peter and Helen. They are joined together not only by their broad interests—of which one is a deep appreciation for Indian art—but also by their support of many good causes. Peter's interest in the visual arts is evident in his founding of the Storm King Art Center, a contemporary sculpture park in Mountainville, New York, and his long-standing involvement with the World Monuments Fund. Helen, a champion of contemporary craft whose manifold contributions to this field are unparalleled, has for many years been a good friend and generous donor to the Museum.

Our deepest thanks are due to the many individuals on the Museum's staff who went to great lengths to produce this publication

in time for the opening of our new South Asian art galleries. Senior Museum Photographer Graydon Wood captured the images of these exquisite works, while Book Production Manager Richard Bonk assured that their reproduction in this publication accurately reflects the quality of the originals. Under the thoughtful direction of Sherry Babbitt, The William T. Ranney Director of Publishing, Editor Sarah Noreika shaped the text into its elegant format, while designer Miko McGinty and her talented team created a felicitous blend of word and image. Senior Scientist Beth A. Price and Conservation Scientist Kate I. Duffy, with Sara Reiter, The Penny and Bob Fox Senior Conservator for Costume and Textiles, contributed answers to the many questions that arose on the materials and processes employed to create these two remarkable works.

Special mention should be made of Neeraja Poddar, the Andrew W. Mellon–Anne d'Harnoncourt Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow in South Asian Art, who drew on her deep knowledge of Vaishnava religion to coauthor this volume and assist with the details of editing. Our greatest thanks are due to Darielle Mason, The Stella Kramrisch Curator of Indian and Himalayan Art and Head of the Department of South Asian Art, who not only contributed the texts on H. Peter Stern and the *pichhwais*, but also was committed to seeing that this publication coincided with the first time these two works have been publicly exhibited together.

Timothy Rub
The George D. Widener Director and Chief Executive Officer





Detail of p. 13

INTRODUCTION

The great scholar of Indian art Stella Kramrisch, on a visit to Storm King Art Center, complimented us by saying, "You have brought earth and sky together."

—H. Peter Stern¹

In their own way, the two Indian shrine hangings recently given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art by H. Peter Stern and documented in this publication also bring earth and sky together. Made to fall behind an image considered a living embodiment of the god Krishna, each presents a vision of how this deity's presence transforms the earthly region where he spent his childhood into a celestial paradise. Called *pichhwais*, such hangings are specific to Pushtimarg (Path of Grace), a now-worldwide sect that worships Krishna through loving devotion. Both works long hung in Stern's home in Mountainville, New York, near the Storm King Art Center, the five-hundred-acre contemporary sculpture park that he spent much of his life creating.

Through his love of Indian art, Stern became friends with Stella Kramrisch, renowned curator of Indian art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Through her he met his future wife, Philadelphian Helen Williams Drutt English, in 1984. Years later, on the occasion of their marriage in 2007, Stern promised these two *pichhwais* to the Museum in memory of Stella. Both masterpieces are highlighted in the Museum's newly reinstalled South Asian art galleries, scheduled to open in October 2016.

THE COLLECTOR

H. Peter Stern

Born in Hamburg, Germany, in 1928, H. Peter Stern (fig. 1) moved to Bucharest, Romania, with his family when he was an infant, and he considered Romania his home.² Before Stern reached his teenage years, however, Hitler's advance into Romania became inevitable, and Stern's father, a chief executive for Shell Oil, resettled the family in the United States. For Stern, attending high school in Scarsdale, New York, was a difficult immersion in a foreign culture, and he increasingly turned toward his love of literature and the arts. He chose to write his senior thesis on Hinduism and Buddhism, a seemingly minor event that began his lifelong fascination with all aspects of India's culture. His interest in India continued into his college years at Harvard and through law school at Yale. Although advised that diplomacy would be an impossible career for a German Jew, he took a break from Yale to earn a master's degree in international relations at Columbia.³ Following several years of practicing law, Stern was invited by his then father-in-law, Ralph E. Ogden, president of Star Expansion Bolt Company, to join that firm.⁴ Almost immediately after Stern's arrival, Ogden moved the company's head office to Mountainville, New York, handed the presidency and chairmanship to his son-in-law, and turned his primary focus to collecting art and to travel.

Ogden found a "soul-mate" in Stern.⁵ They had an emotional rapport, and their friendship was a meeting of minds,



Fig. 1. Helen Williams Drutt English and H. Peter Stern, Storm King Art Center Gala, Christie's, New York, October 11, 2011. Photograph by Don Pollard



Fig. 2. Stern in Târgu Jiu, Romania, with Constantin Brancusi's *Endless Column* (1918) in the background, July 21, 2011. Photograph by HWDE

more so in terms of aesthetics than of business. In 1960 they founded the Storm King Art Center. Initially intending it to be a traditional museum, they soon engaged landscape architect William A. Rutherford, and together they transformed the terrain into a uniquely man-made "natural" rolling landscape filled with perfectly sited monumental contemporary sculptures. Storm King has been Stern's greatest interest during the ensuing decades. Ogden died in 1974; Stern sold Star Expansion in 1993 and continued to grow Storm King into what it is today—arguably the leading institution of its type in the world—until his retirement in 2010. Currently, it continues to flourish under the leadership of his son, John. Peter Stern's immense energy, curiosity, and graciousness helped him succeed in a range of enthusiasms—from classical music to international politics, from wine to mime to dressage. His love of the visual arts and South Asia, and his collecting of Indian paintings and textiles merged in his forty-year involvement with the World Monuments Fund, for which he spearheaded the conservation of monuments in Angkor, Cambodia, and of Constantin Brancusi's sculpture *Endless Column* (1918) in Târgu Jiu, Romania (fig. 2).⁶

Mountainville and Manhattan

Stern divided his Indian art collection between his two homes—his apartment in Manhattan and his former home, Cedar House, in Mountainville. The Mountainville house, a light-filled wooden



Fig. 3. *Vriksha (Tree) Pichhwai* (see p. 13) installed in Cedar House, Stern's residence in Mountainville, NY, 2012. Photograph by Jerry L. Thompson

structure set on a bluff, had an alpine feel. Despite his expertise in contemporary sculpture, his apartment is decorated (as was his former house) primarily with works from India, contemporary ceramics, Nakashima furniture, and, to a lesser extent, works from other parts of Asia. In Cedar House, exquisite Mughal hangings swathed the spacious living room. The bed was draped in finely hand-printed Indian textiles. Superb Rajput miniatures and British Company School images of royal architecture hung in the stairwells, while embroidered velvet tent pieces lined the halls. The two *pichhwais* now in the Museum were displayed prominently: The large square-shaped painted *pichhwai* hung directly across from the front door to greet visitors (fig. 3); the narrower one, dyed in a technique called *kalamkari*, hung adjacent to the bedroom.⁷

The painted *pichhwai* was on public view only once before, in the 1985–86 exhibition *India!* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.⁸ The show's curator, painting connoisseur-collector-scholar extraordinaire Stuart Cary Welch (1928–2008), was Stern's long-time friend. For *India!*, the most magnificent exhibition of his career, Welch gathered together 350 of his favorite works, primarily courtly paintings and decorative arts, from public and private collections around the world. The show was a key element of the 1985–86 US Festival of India, a nationwide government-to-government celebration of art and culture. The *kalamkari pichhwai* has never before been exhibited to the public.

Stella Kramrisch

Among the twentieth century's foremost historians, collectors, curators, and connoisseurs of the art of India, Stella Kramrisch (1896–1993; fig. 4) was the Museum's curator and curator emeritus of Indian art from 1956 to 1993. Trained at the University of

Vienna, she arrived in India in 1921 to teach at Santiniketan, home to the experimental university of Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), the country's leading intellectual of the era. Soon she was hired by the University of Calcutta, where she remained for nearly thirty years. In 1950 she moved to Philadelphia to teach at the University of Pennsylvania and was soon also hired by the Museum. During her forty years in Philadelphia, Kramrisch built the Museum's holdings of Indian art into a world-class collection. She published on all aspects of India's arts, from textiles and paintings to contemporary art and performance, but she is best remembered for her scholarship on Hindu temple sculpture, folk art, and the god Shiva.⁹

Given Stern's early love of Indian art and culture, it is hardly surprising that he and Kramrisch became friends. In 1984, through his connection with Kramrisch, Stern met Helen Williams Drutt English, whose eponymous gallery was "to the crafts what Alfred Stieglitz's '291' Gallery was to photography earlier in this century."¹⁰ Drutt English's connections with the Museum are extensive and long-standing, and she was extremely close to Kramrisch. She became friends with Stern and his second wife, biologist and painter Margaret Johns (1928–2003). Following Johns's death, Stern and Drutt English, also widowed, married.¹¹ To mark the occasion of their wedding, Stern promised the Museum two of his finest Indian works, to be given in honor of his nuptials and in memory of Stella Kramrisch.



Fig. 4. Museum Director Anne d'Harnoncourt admiring Stella Kramrisch's Padma Bhushan medal after it was awarded by Indian Consul General P. P. Souza on September 15, 1982. Photographs, Stella Kramrisch Papers, Philadelphia Museum of Art Library and Archives



Detail of p. 23

THE RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

Krishna

Mischievous, seductive, and heroic, Krishna is one of the most beloved gods in the Hindu pantheon. According to Hindu mythology, he is the eighth and most perfect incarnation of the great god Vishnu, born to rid the earth of various evildoers. But many religious groups worship him as a deity in his own right, superior to all other gods. Krishna is most often imagined as blue-skinned, wearing yellow-orange garments and peacock feathers in his crown.

While texts also tell of Krishna's later life, the events of his early years in Braj (a region in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India) commonly form the focus for his worship. Having been threatened with death by his evil uncle, on the night of his birth Krishna was secretly taken by his father from the palace at Mathura and brought to a cowherding village on the banks of the Yamuna River. There the mischievous and beloved child performed miracles. As a handsome youth, Krishna played with the *gopis* (milkmaids), who pursued his irresistible fluting through the forest.

A favorite Krishna tale tells of a miracle he performed when only seven years old. He instructed his kinsmen in the cowherding village to stop worshipping Indra, Lord of Storms, and to turn their devotion to the local hill called Govardhana. Greatly angered, Indra unleashed a terrible storm intended to teach Krishna and the village a lesson. But, using only his left arm, Krishna effortlessly lifted Mount Govardhana and held it like an umbrella to



Fig. 5. *Krishna Holds Aloft Mount Govardhana*, detail of a page from a dispersed series of the *Satsai* of Bihari. Datia, Madhya Pradesh, India, c. 1770. Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver-colored paint on paper. Image: $7\frac{1}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$ inches (18.1 × 19.1 cm); sheet: $8\frac{7}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ inches (22.5 × 23.5 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art. 125th Anniversary Acquisition. Alvin O. Bellak Collection, 2004-149-66

shelter his people, thereby humbling Indra's pride (fig. 5). Images of Krishna with his left arm raised above his head as if supporting a mountain represent this miraculous episode, which, as discussed below, is the basis for the iconography of the principal icon of the Pushtimarg sect.

Pushtimarg

Founded in the late fifteenth century by Vallabhacharya (1479–1531), Pushtimarg (Path of Grace) is one of many devotional communities that worship Krishna as their chosen deity.¹² Followers of the sect perform service and dedicate all possessions to the god. Initially, Pushtimarg had its stronghold in Braj, where Krishna's Govardhana miracle and many other childhood adventures occurred. In the seventeenth century, the locus of the community shifted westward to the site of Nathdwara in Rajasthan (fig. 6). Soon the Pushtimarg leaders secured the patronage of powerful rulers in the region; not long after, groups of devotees spread the sect to other parts of India and beyond.

The way in which followers of Pushtimarg envision and express their relationship to Krishna is known by the general term *bhakti* (personal devotion). Common to the many different *bhakti* sects that emerged across India from about the eighth century is the rejection of impersonal, priestly intervention in favor of direct emotional, often ecstatic connection between the devotee and the god. *Bhakti* sects may worship different gods (or separate forms of the same god) and have distinctive rituals and customs. Typically, however, each community has a charismatic founder—an extraordinary individual often elevated to divine status. Like Pushtimarg, some of the most prolific and powerful *bhakti* communities venerate Krishna.



Fig. 6



Fig. 7. Detail of *Discovery of the Shrinathji Image*. Nathdwara, Rajasthan, India, 18th century. Opaque watercolor with gold on paper. Image: 4¹⁵/₁₆ × 7¹/₁₆ inches (12.5 × 17.9 cm); sheet: 5⁵/₈ × 7³/₄ inches (14.3 × 19.7 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art. Stella Kramrisch Collection, 1994-148-395

Vallabhacharya

The birth of Vallabhacharya, founder of the Pushtimarg sect, is connected with many miraculous events.¹³ His parents initially believed he was stillborn and left his body beneath a tree. Vishnu then appeared to both Vallabhacharya's mother and father in a dream, telling them their child was alive and well.¹⁴ Returning to the tree, his parents found Vallabhacharya safe within a protective circle of flames.

According to Pushtimarg tradition, in 1410 the raised left arm of what turned out to be an icon of Krishna spontaneously emerged from the ground near the summit of Mount Govardhana (fig. 7). In 1479, at the very moment of Vallabhacharya's birth, the icon's face emerged. Although Pushtimarg devotees came to honor multiple icons and forms of Krishna, it is this very icon that became and remains the sect's focus.

In 1494 Vallabhacharya visited Braj, where he had a vision in which Krishna revealed to him how humans might be "cleansed of their faults."¹⁵ This is considered the moment when the Pushtimarg sect came into existence. The words Krishna spoke to Vallabhacharya became known as the Brahmasambandha mantra, by which a person dedicates himself, his actions, and his possessions to Krishna; they remain the words of Pushtimarg initiation.

Prompted by his 1494 vision, Vallabhacharya traveled to Mount Govardhana and established the identity of the now fully emerged icon as the god Krishna. He named this Krishna Gopalaji (Keeper of Cows) and constructed a small shrine for it. Vallabhacharya's son Vitthalnath later renamed Gopalaji as Govardhananathji (Lord of Govardhana); Vallabhacharya's grandson designated it by yet another name—Shrinathji, a title by which the principal Pushtimarg icon is still known today.¹⁶

Swarupa

A Pushtimarg religious statue, whether Shrinathji or another variation of Krishna, is known as a *swarupa* (literally “own form”).¹⁷ Unlike other Hindu icons that are perceived as a god’s temporary home, every Pushtimarg *swarupa* is regarded as a living, breathing Krishna. The *swarupa* thereby requires constant care or it will suffer the effects of deprivation and neglect. It resides in a *haveli* (mansion) rather than a *mandir* (temple), and must be clothed and fed each day.

Pushtimarg has nine major *swarupas*, of which Shrinathji is the foremost. These nine are considered to be naturally manifested, rather than man-made. In addition, while all Pushtimarg icons are considered *swarupas*, these nine possess the distinction of having been personally cared for by the founder, Vallabhacharya, and by his son Vitthalnath, continuing in unbroken worship to the present day. This connection with the sect’s charismatic originator gives these icons tremendous authority.

Seva

The care needed by a *swarupa* is called *seva* (service); it is both perpetual and elaborate.¹⁸ The basic elements of Pushtimarg *seva* were laid down by Vallabhacharya and elaborated during the leadership of Vitthalnath.¹⁹ The two main categories of *seva* are the daily acts of service and the annual celebrations or festivals. For *swarupas*, the day lasts from approximately 5:00 a.m. to 5:30–6:00 p.m., depending on the season. Daily *seva* is divided into eight parts and involves various acts in which the deity is awakened, clothed, fed, and put to bed. For about fifteen minutes during the activities in each of the eight parts, devotees are permitted to view the *swarupa* and simultaneously be seen by the god. This act of seeing and being seen is called *darshan*, an important component of most Hindu devotion.

Along with fulfilling the god’s basic needs, providing his comforts, and facilitating his interactions with devotees, *seva* came to involve donating *vastra* and *shringara* (elaborate dress and ornamentation) so that the god and his subsidiary deities could be embellished in royal style befitting the time of year, season, or festival. Ornamentation is equally part of home worship, and a simple painting or print of the god might be “dressed” in a decorative frame or covered with flowers or jewels. Another key component of *seva* is providing the *swarupa* entertainment, especially with *raag* (fine music). Different courts, regions, and families had (and continue to have) varying traditions of *seva*. Some focus on the adornment of the deity and his surroundings; others focus on wonderful food and music; and still others emphasize the devotees’ mental discipline—although each of these elements is in some degree part of all forms of *seva*.²⁰



Detail of p. 23

Pichhwais

One final key element of *seva* is to adorn the god’s home, especially the shrine interior. These decorations are as expensive as the patron-devotee of a *haveli* can afford, since they earn the giver not only social status, but also spiritual merit. They range from thrones, beds, or swings—often covered in gold and jewels—to rich draperies that create an opulent and appropriate environment. Just as a king might switch from his winter palace to a breezier summer palace, substitute cotton rugs for heavy carpets, or decorate for a special event, a *swarupa* has his furnishings changed according to the season or festival. Although gifts to Shrinathji at Nathdwara are legion, so are donations to the other principal *swarupas*. A *haveli* therefore may acquire multiple panoplies for each occasion, allowing older pieces or sets to be discarded when they become worn out or usurped by better.

The elaborate fabric furnishings include decorative horizontal cloths to cover steps and platforms, bolsters to soften the god’s throne and bed, and canopies to shelter him or even envelop the entire room. Each type has its own special name and form. Multiple sets of such cloths worked in a variety of techniques, colors, and patterns appropriate to the season and festival form the annual regalia. This soft decor transforms the shrine into an imaginary world that changes throughout the year, from gilded throne room to verdant forest, from royal bedchamber to rustic love nest.

The most extravagant and highly decorated of these soft furnishings are *pichhwais* (literally “hung at the back”). They are cloths of various sizes that hang behind or around *swarupas*. Like the backdrop of a stage, they create the overall mood and set the scene. During *darshan*, the devotee sees the deity against and within the environment created by the *pichhwai*, and so enters it him- or herself.



The Pushtimarg Calendar and the Annakuta Festival

The Pushtimarg calendar is filled with festivals marking the seasons, Krishna's many *lilas* (divine plays, in the sense of both enjoyment and miraculous adventures), and events related to Vallabhacharya and his lineage. One of the most important annual festivals is that of Annakuta, which celebrates the miracle of Mount Govardhana. During Annakuta, a huge pile of partially cooked rice mixed with lentils surrounded by sweets is placed in front of the *swarupa* for him to feast on.²¹

In 1588 Vitthalnath organized an elaborate version of the festival at Govardhana, the site of the original Shrinathji shrine, which was attended by the nine main *swarupas*.²² The concept of *chappan bhoga*, the term applied to a sumptuous and extravagant meal, originated with this feast, during which, according to legend, the divines were offered fifty-six delicacies.²³ The descendants of Vitthalnath also arranged such grand Annakuta festivals, but rarely did the nine *swarupas* come together again. Because the *swarupas* are imagined as children, the food offered is not overly spicy or salty and includes a preponderance of desserts.²⁴

Pushtimarg in Rajasthan and Beyond

In the second half of the seventeenth century, changing political circumstances and concern for the safety of their followers compelled Pushtimarg leaders to leave the Braj region, where the sect had first been established. They decided to head west toward Rajasthan and Gujarat, where support could be expected from sympathetic Hindu Rajput rulers, merchants, and other wealthy members of the community.²⁵ In 1670 Shrinathji was secretly taken out of Braj, hidden in a bullock cart.²⁶ After two years of wandering, the sect settled in the small town of Nathdwara in the kingdom of Mewar (near modern Udaipur in southern Rajasthan). According to legend, the wheels of the cart transporting Shrinathji got stuck in the mud, which his followers took as a sign from the god himself that he wanted to stay in Nathdwara.

The other eight original *swarupas* also left Braj around the same time. While some journeyed for decades in search of a permanent seat, by the early eighteenth century all nine had settled in new homes in Rajasthan or Gujarat.²⁷ Although the popularity of Pushtimarg varied over time and at different courts, these *swarupas* received royal patronage, and indeed some, such as the *swarupa* Brijnathji of Kota in eastern Rajasthan (fig. 8), were so important that they were considered the *de facto* rulers of the kingdom. Today some continue to be worshipped by hereditary royalty and hold intense emotional significance for people in the region.

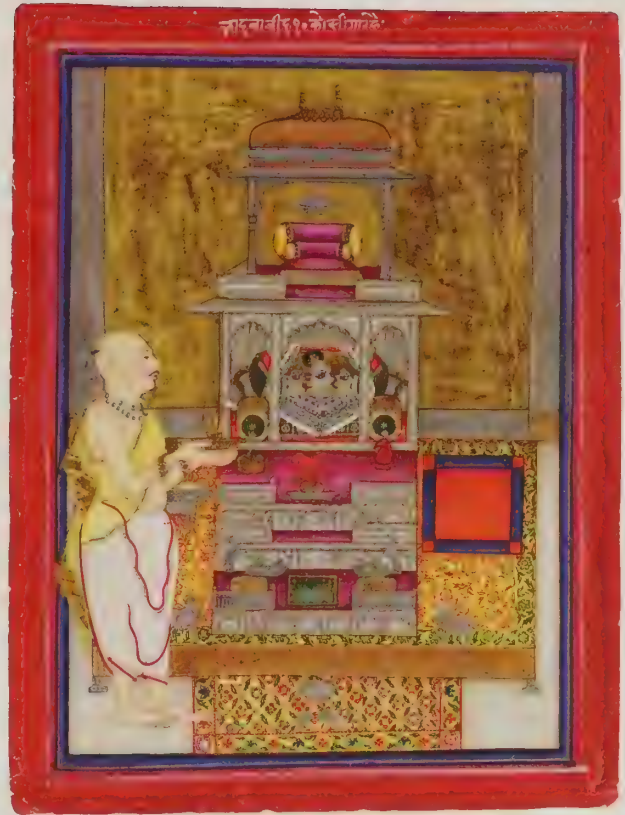


Fig. 8. Maharao Kishor Singh of Kota Performs the Lamp-Waving Ceremony of Brijnathji the Night before Krishna's Birthday. Kota, Rajasthan, India, c. 1830–40. Opaque watercolor, gold, and silver or tin on paper. Image: 8 $\frac{1}{16}$ × 6 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches (21.7 × 16.2 cm); sheet: 10 $\frac{3}{16}$ × 7 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (25.9 × 19.7 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art. Gift of the Friends of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1968-12-4

Despite the movements of the nine principal *swarupas*, the sect's presence remained in its region of origin and across much of northern India, including in special shrines in the holy city of Varanasi to the east. From as soon as the early seventeenth century, Pushtimarg devotees spread even more broadly, especially through traveling Gujarati merchant families. One of the earliest and strongest Pushtimarg communities was composed of merchants who moved south to Hyderabad in the Deccan region; this community's identity has been maintained into the present.²⁸ Today Pushtimarg *havelis* can be found across nearly all continents, from Africa to Australia, from Europe to the Americas.



Vriksha (Tree) Pichhwai

Rajasthan, India (possibly Kishangarh or Nathdwara)

c. 18th century with 19th-century repairs²⁹

Opaque paint with gold and silver decoration on cotton fabric

8 feet 4 inches × 8 feet 8¼ inches (2.54 × 2.65 m)

Gift of H. Peter Stern on the occasion of his marriage to Helen Williams Drutt English in 2007, and in memory of Stella Kramrisch, 2015-145-2







The Sky

Gold-rimmed white clouds, snaking lightning bolts, and soaring cranes fill the sky, signifying the early summer rains that break the drying heat of western India and bring foliage, flowers, and flowing rivers. Four jewel-encrusted *vimanas* (celestial chariots) shaped like peacocks carry minor male deities who sprinkle blossoms to honor Lord Krishna. Both the sun and the moon appear together: At right, the moon is a plain orb of gold; at left, the golden sun is depicted with a human face, carefully drawn in the unusual perspective of a frontal view. On its forehead, the sun displays a red U-shaped *tilak* (sectarian mark) worn by devotees of Vishnu or Krishna, a mark considered one of the essential outward displays of Pushtimarg devotion.³⁰

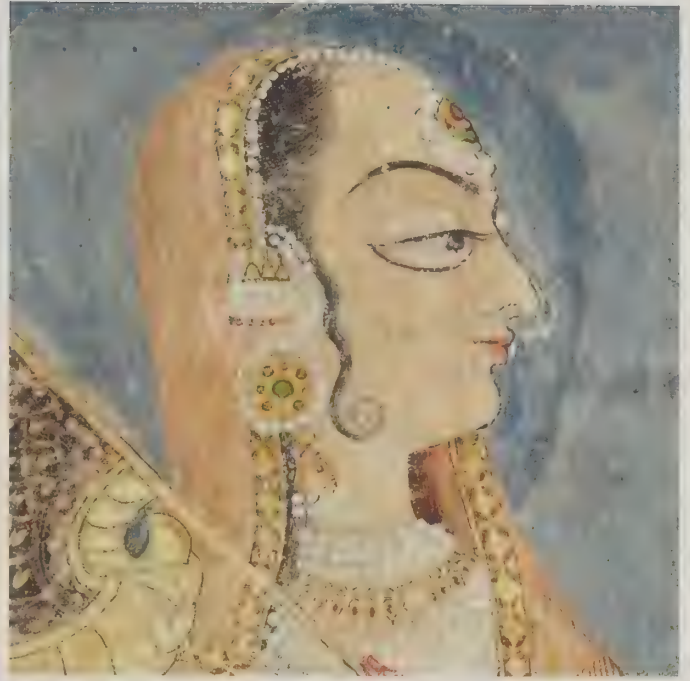




The Trees

Huge trees and the apparent lack of a focal deity imply a mere bucolic idyll. Yet, among other elements, the single tree at center indicates that this is a scene of devotion.³¹ The circular formation of its leaves shows that it is a *kadamba* tree, which represents Krishna thanks to its sweet-scented, orb-shaped flowers in the yellow-orange color of Krishna's traditional garments; this *kadamba*, however, is not yet in bloom.³² A vine dripping with white blossoms entwines the trunk and lower branches just as, we imagine, Krishna's primary inamorata, Radha, with her fellow *gopis* (milkmaids) entwine the god in their love. Lively green ring-neck parrots cavort beneath the branches while smaller orange ones rest in the boughs.

At each side, a mango tree bearing clusters of ripe fruit provides feasts for additional orange parrots and confirms that this is the hot season, perhaps just before the monsoon, when these luscious treats appear.³³ Below buzz swarms of blue bees, barely evident against the indigo ground. They reinforce the presence of Krishna, one of whose epithets is Madana (Honey)—the *gopis* are drawn to him as bees are to nectar.³⁴ The sprigs, trunks, fruits, and vines on the trees are outlined in gold, infusing a sense of magical idealism to the forest. This is not the earthly forest we know. Instead, when Krishna inhabits the forest of Vrindavan—where he was raised, tended his cows, and played with the *gopis*—it becomes his paradise of Goloka (Cow World), wherein every leaf and adoring face (human or bovine) reflect his divine light.



The Gopis

The eight women facing the *kadamba* tree stand like attendants to an enthroned king—or an enshrined god.³⁵ They are the *gopis*, the married villagers so attracted to the beauty and music of the youthful Krishna that they abandon their homes to pursue and please him. Yet far from the simple village milkmaids of the *Bhagavata Purana* and other stories of Krishna's youth, these *gopis* wear Rajput courtly attire.³⁶ Since one of the main forms of Pushtimarg worship is for the devotee to imagine him- or herself in the role of the *gopi*, it is not surprising that courtly patrons would want the maids depicted in this more familiar—and flattering—form.

Although their garments are common to western Indian courtiers and villages alike, the materials, ornaments, and details indicate high status. The *ghaghras* (long, full skirts, gathered at the waist) are patterned, hemmed, and belted in gold; different colored slips peak through their open fronts.³⁷ Gold short-sleeved, tight-fitting, midriff-bearing *cholis* (blouses) barely cover their breasts and show a distinctive pattern of seams with a low, rounded neck (a few even have small flowers embroidered at the nipples). Finally, each *gopi* wears an *odhni* (long scarf), which is tucked into the front of her skirt and then draped over her head and around one shoulder, and left to cascade down her back.³⁸ Delicate parallel gold lines cover the surface to show the scarf is made of a diaphanous golden cloth.

The *gopis'* jewelry matches their garments in richness. Each maid wears multiple strings of pearls, which are interrupted by a jeweled gold necklace, each of a different form. On their ears are traditional Rajasthani *karanphul-jhumkas* (*karanphul*, meaning “ear-flower,” is the circular upper part; *jhumka* is the bell-shaped pendant) made of gold inset with cabochon emeralds and rubies surrounded by additional pearls. More pearls attach large jeweled gold *mang tikkas* (forehead drops). Their *naths* (nose rings) are relatively simple, consisting of only a gold loop with abutting pearls. On their arms, along with gold and pearl *chudas* (wide cuffs of bangles), they wear *hathphuls* (hand-flowers), each comprising a bracelet and five rings attached to a jeweled gold “flower” on the back of the hand by pearl chains. Gold and pearl *payals* (anklets) complete the regalia.



The Ritual Objects

Each *gopi* carries in her hands special objects that are used in Pushtimarg rituals to honor Krishna. The outer two bear shallow golden trays of floral garlands.³⁹ The next hold sumptuously embroidered fabric *pankhas* (fans) with gold ruffles and handles, and bejeweled boxes of *paan* (betel leaf), a digestive symbolic of hospitality and intrinsic to Pushtimarg ritual. The next pair sports gold-handled *chauris* (horsehair fly whisks), age-old symbols of royalty in South Asia, and single lotus flowers (pink on the right and blue on the left).

The two women immediately flanking the *kadamba* tree raise *morchhals* (peacock-feather fans), perhaps the most common accoutrement in Pushtimarg ritual.⁴⁰ The peacock is closely associated with Krishna, who likewise has a blue body, and therefore fans made of its tail feathers are an intrinsic part of his worship.⁴¹ The woman to the left carries another blue lotus—a flower symbolic of purity and, thanks to its color, representative of Krishna. Her counterpart bears instead a *vanamala* (long garland of wildflowers), another element common in Pushtimarg worship.

Offering food and hospitality, cooling the air with fans, whisking away the flies, washing the feet, presenting pleasant-smelling flowers and garlands to soothe and delight the senses—these are the acts with which one greets an honored guest or treats a king and that one performs as part of daily Pushtimarg *seva* (service) to the god. The *kadamba* tree itself stands in for Krishna. The ritual objects depicted in the painting stand in for those used during worship. In addition, a *swarupa* would have been

placed in front of the *pichhwai*, and actual ritual objects would have been wielded by the officiants. Thus, in concept, there are two forms of Krishna and two sets of ritual objects, while the *pichhwai*'s verdant landscape situates the god and his worshippers within the enchanted forest of Vrindavan.

The Cows and Their Gopas

Near the bottom edge, the *gopas* (cowherds) who flank the herd of cows at first appear dressed in appropriate village attire, with brief animal-skin lower garments. On closer examination, their gold turbans and ornaments belie this simple narrative. The wonderfully attentive cows and calves gaze adoringly up at the tree representing their Lord Krishna, many bending one front leg as if preparing to curtsy.

They, like the other figures, are ornamented. Strands of gold bells dangle around their necks and heads; their horns, some reddened with henna, have gold tips, while their lower legs, like the hands and feet of the maids above, are hennaed. The herd shows a mix of colors, primarily white but also tan and spotted. Unlike the various zebu-related cattle breeds usually associated with India, these cows have very small humps, thus resembling the Gir breed of western India, a type associated with Krishna. However, they do not have the long, floppy ears and delicate bodies of Girs. In fact, they reflect not so much a specific breed, but rather the cows depicted in Nathdwara painting.



The Yamuna River

At the very bottom of the painting is what looks like a brown ground, a seemingly minor part of the composition. But this band has enormous significance: It is the holy river Yamuna, which flows through the region of Braj in northern India, where Krishna was born and spent his youth (see fig. 6). This region is where the Pushtimarg sect began and is the focus of its ideology. The Yamuna passes through the cowherd village of Gokula and the surrounding forests of Vrindavan. It continues on to the city of Mathura, where Krishna was born, before converging with the holy Ganges far to the east. The presence of the Yamuna together with the trees, *gopis*, *gopas*, and cows places the scene in Vrindavan, giving it an earthly and narrative anchor. Ripples, green lotus leaves, gold and orange fish, crabs, and other aquatic denizens bring the river to life. In the work's original state, the river was not muddy brown but gleaming silver.⁴²



Technique and Materials

This enormous work was originally painted on a single piece of hand-loomed and hand-woven cotton cloth. It is almost perfectly square and clearly intended to be hung flat against a wall. Although it displays the distinctive horizontal composition customary for Pushtimarg *pichhwais*, the fact that it is a single, undivided composition—as opposed to two sides connected by a thinner top—implies that it was made for a *haveli* (mansion) and a *swarupa* other than that of Shrinathji at Nathdwara.

Although the indigo-blue background makes it appear as though the cloth had been dyed before being painted, this work, like *pichhwais* and other cloth paintings from Nathdwara and the courts of Rajasthan, utilizes essentially the same opaque watercolor technique and pigments as Rajput paintings on paper. The blue background appears to have been painted directly on the cloth. The areas for the figures and objects, on the other hand, were left blank (reserved) and then executed with an underlying preparatory layer (primarily lead white), which was burnished to an impervious surface using a smooth stone. Close viewing shows places where the artist did not entirely cover the surface in colors (for example, the rear deity in the *vimana* second from the left), revealing that the main images were first sketched in black. They were then filled in with opaque

paints, similar to those used for works on paper.⁴³ Around the figures, some of the indigo brush marks remain visible. Only small details, such as the white of the vine flowers or the clouds, were painted over the indigo. The final step was to highlight the painting with gold and silver. The only exception is the river, where the silver was applied directly on the fabric and then painted with sea creatures and lily pads.⁴⁴

Surrounding the entire composition is a narrow border consisting of a gold-outlined floral scroll between thicker gold lines. Alternating flowers retain their bright orange pigment, but those between are no longer present and appear to have been precisely cut out, leaving holes (or voids) in the shape of foliage. A possible explanation for the absent foliage is the use of a corrosive pigment, such as verdigris, for the paint. Verdigris is created by reacting copper metal with salt water or vinegar, and then grinding the resulting corrosion product. While verdigris has a lovely deep green color, it is known to turn brown over time and, under certain conditions, to degrade underlying cellulosic supports, such as paper or, as in this case, cotton cloth.⁴⁵ The complete absence of any remnant of pigment along the edges of the holes supports the supposition that the degraded fabric was removed to be replaced by green-painted fabric, as with the trees; however, the repair was never completed. Likewise, the trees (and other green sections now containing the nineteenth-century pigment chromium yellow) might have suffered a similar outcome. No longer sightly, these sections were replaced or overpainted to make the piece again appropriate for devotional use.⁴⁶

Use and Regional Style

This truly monumental painting was undoubtedly a *pichhwa* made to hang behind a major *swarupa* that was the focus of a Pushtimarg *haveli*. Its large square format and refined courtly style indicate it was most likely created to back one of the *swarupas* enshrined at a Rajasthani court rather than at the shrine of Nathdwara.

When Stuart Cary Welch published this work in 1985, he tentatively attributed it to Jodhpur, a kingdom in northern Rajasthan ruled by one branch of the Rajput Rathore lineage.⁴⁷ He also noted that Stella Kramrisch believed it to have been painted in nearby Bikaner, ruled by another branch of the Rathores. Welch, however, presented no argument for either attribution. A reassessment in light of more recent scholarship on the Nathdwara painting lineage suggests that, as Welch and Kramrisch indicated, the piece probably was produced at

a royal workshop rather than at Nathdwara.⁴⁸ Although the elongated eyes, bold foliage, and somewhat full bodies reflect Nathdwara painting, the Stern Collection's painted *pichhwa* displays far greater refinement of detail, more delicate coloring, and a taller, slenderer body type.

In the thirty years since Welch's exhibition, a number of scholars have studied late eighteenth-century Rajput painting, providing us with a better understanding of workshop style for both the major and minor courts.⁴⁹ However, we also now recognize that, far from working in isolation, court ateliers shared across borders in many ways, including through their painters' travels.

Features link this work to the smaller Rathore state of Kishangarh (originally an offshoot of Jodhpur) rather than to Jodhpur or Bikaner. Paintings from Kishangarh dating from the second half of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century are well known for their elegant exaggeration of figures' features—huge crescent eyes and arching eyebrows, chiseled profiles, narrow faces, delicate lips, and thin bodies. This physical type is said to have originated with court painter Nihal Chand (1710–1782), who created it to reflect the poetic descriptions his patron Raja Savant Singh (r. 1748–57) dedicated to his beloved courtesan, Bani Thani. Amit Ambalal, however, has speculated that these characteristics, particularly the large eyes, instead may reflect the Kishangarh rulers' intimate relationship with Nathdwara.⁵⁰ Indeed, Kishangarh, together with Kota in southeastern Rajasthan, had the longest and closest links to Pushtimarg among the Rajasthani courts; a major *swarupa* resided in Kishangarh, and the rajas and courtiers visited Nathdwara on a regular basis. *Pichhwais* clearly made in the royal Kishangarh workshop are known to have been gifted to Shrinathji's shrine at Nathdwara from at least the early eighteenth century.⁵¹

Here the *gopis'* coiffures with long side curls, exquisitely arching brows, elongated eyes, elegant bodies, and diaphanous drapery likely reflect the Kishangarh type a few generations after Chand, but their less-chiseled features and slightly heavier eyes and bodies may reveal the importance for the painter of works from Nathdwara.⁵² How might this reflect the artist's own understanding of—or even pilgrimage to—Nathdwara? Style, as much recent scholarship has demonstrated, involved and continues to involve far more intentionality than previously believed.⁵³ Madhuvanti Ghose, drawing on the intensive fieldwork of Tryna Lyons, writes, "The artists of Nathdwara did not forget how to paint in the more refined styles of Kotah [Kota] or Kishangarh, which they can do even today."⁵⁴







Annakuta Festival and Gopala (Cowherd) Krishna Pichhwai

Machilipatnam region, Andhra Pradesh (probably commissioned from
Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh)

Late 18th–early 19th century

Cotton resist and surface painted, stamped and mordant dyed (*kalamkari*),
heightened with applied and painted gold

6 feet 5½ inches × 3 feet 9¾ inches × 1⅛ inches (1.97 × 1.16 × 0.029 m)

Gift of H. Peter Stern on the occasion of his marriage to Helen Williams Drutt English
in 2007, and in memory of Stella Kramrisch, 2015-145-1





The Border

A multicolored woven outer edge surrounds the whole. Encircling the series of vignettes are green-backed floral patterned strips (the same design separates the three lower panels). Although each vignette differs slightly, the squares alternate with a seated image of Krishna facing a *gopi* (milkmaid), perhaps his beloved Radha. He holds a lotus flower; she a vertical blue rectangle that is likely a holy text. The abutting squares depict facing pairs of *gopis*: one with a bowl of three flames, as used in *aarti* (the offering of light); the other with a *morchhal* (peacock-feather fan). Peacocks fill the irregular turnings at the upper corners. Unlike such scenes found on textiles intended to cover horizontal surfaces (furniture, trays, or the ground) or to be worn, the images here are oriented in the same direction as those on the central panels.



Top Panel: Krishna Gopalaji

Backed in bright red, the triangular top panel is filled with flute-playing Krishna Gopalaji (Keeper of Cows). Like Shrinathji himself, Gopalaji stands fully frontal, feet turned outward, and wears a flaring courtly dress adopted from a Mughal prototype.⁵⁵ His off-center peacock-feather *mukuta* (crown) presses against the frame. Long garlands and jewels drape from his neck to his ankles, and on his feet he wears *padukas* (platform sandals with toe knobs). *Gopis* attend him, the inner two holding *morchhals*, the outer *chauris* (horsehair fly whisks). In their other hands appear boxes of *paan* (betel leaf) and bowls of piled food—clearly standard ritual objects, although not as highly detailed as those in the painted *pichhwai* from Rajasthan (see p. 18). Almost as tall as the *gopis*—and equal in height to Krishna—are flanking peacocks, their gold feathers over blue bodies echoing the god's beaded chest.





Central Field: Botehs

A large square field of *botehs* (mango-shaped decorative elements best known in Euro-America as part of paisley patterning) fills the cloth's center. The alternating large and small motifs are set in ten rows, with the tops of the motifs curving in the opposite direction. The *botehs* are dyed a dull brown-green with red highlights; those in the bottom three rows have thick gold outlines.



Top Lower Panel: Krishna in Vrindavan

Below the field of *botehs* is a narrow panel with an iconic image of Krishna Gopalaji at center. He appears much as he does in the top panel, but he lacks the *padukas*, his barefootedness emphasizing the more rural setting. Indeed, here he is clearly in the idyllic forest of Vrindavan, and all the *gopis*—a crowd of twelve—have gathered to admire him. Above his head rises the canopy of a flowering tree; it may be a *kadamba*, but the multiblossom flowers suggest it more likely represents a *Sita-Ashoka* (*Saraca indica*), considered the tree of love, which blooms through much of the year and bears clusters of perfumed blossoms. In its branches

perch two peacocks, while its trunk winds up Krishna's side as might a consort. Each *gopi* carries a small gold jug of milk on her head, but these meaningful accoutrements are nearly lost in the trees that seem to burst from the pots. Although we know the trees in fact represent the forest, they do double symbolic duty in resembling the ancient auspicious agricultural motif of the *puṇnaghata* (full pot brimming with foliage). Each *gopi* raises one hand to fan Lord Krishna with either a fabric *pankha* (fan) or a *morchhal*, while in her other hand she bears a tray full of food and *paan*. The scene's indigo ground is almost sky blue, much lighter than that of the *botehs* above.





Bottom Panel: The Annakuta Festival

By far the most detailed segment of the *pichhwai*, the lowest panel features a depiction of Annakuta, the most important annual festival of the Pushtimarg year. This elaborate celebration reenacts Krishna's feat of lifting Mount Govardhana (see p. 7).

At top appears a row of buildings against a green ground. With their variety of roofs, they represent a highly simplified and stylized version of the architecture of the holy town of Nathdwara, with its many gates, squares, *havelis* (mansions), and other structures. On the far right, the bright red building with a wide door and flat roof may be the famed *lal-darwaza* (red gate) through which one traditionally enters the town.⁵⁶ The next three have shallow domes, like many of the *havelis* modeled on domestic or palace architecture. The five structures on the left show *nagara shikharas* (tall curved towers), found in north Indian temple architecture, including at the main temple of Shrinathji. All but the building at far right are topped with triangular flags, which indicate that god is present. On each side, bare-chested *goswamis* (priests) stand amid a forest landscape of trees and birds (some of which perhaps represent the many pigeons that traditionally occupy the town and that have taken on symbolic affinity with Krishna).

At the bottom of this panel is a strip of medium blue representing the holy river Yamuna. The river's placement and function recall those

in the Rajasthani painted *pichhwai* (see p. 13), but here the water is bright blue and features crocodiles—in addition to gold-outlined lotuses, fish, cranes, and turtles—and its banks are delineated by a white wall with red-backed green gateways, each with yellow awnings. These gateways represent *ghats* (stepped banks), by which one can access a river and which help keep the water in its course. Unlike the ever-flowing Yamuna in Braj, Nathdwara's only river is the usually dry Banas. Yet as a replication of the holy world of Krishna's childhood, here the Banas is the Yamuna, and every shrine, square, tree, and detail of Nathdwara has its symbolic parallel with a place in the holy landscape of Braj and Vrindavan.

The festival itself takes place between the representation of the river and the town, just as the actual event occurs in the main square outside the temple of Shrinathji. A darker blue creates a distinct foreground to the architecture of the *havelis* and city. At each side, as in the painted *pichhwai*, *gopas* (cowherds) and their cows gaze in adoration. At the center of the rocky landscape, bowls and pots of sweets surround the odd-looking white triangle that is an enormous mound of rice, traditionally weighing over two-and-a-half tons, that represents Mount Govardhana. To its left stand men and boys, their hands held together with palms open, as if ready to receive the blessed food. The blue-skinned boy in gold at the lower front is Krishna himself; his brother Balarama, dressed in gold and



looking outward at the viewer, stands behind him. Opposite the male figures stand the female devotees. Although the male and female figures all wear rich clothing, the presence of Krishna and Balarama shows us that they are not present-day donors but the mythic villagers. Indeed, in recognition of the story, the actual festival as held at Nathdwara today allows only members of the local cowherder community (the Bhil tribe) to partake of the "mountain" of blessed food. At a designated moment, Bhil men race in and grab as much as they can carry.⁵⁷



Materials and Technique

Kalamkari is an ancient textile-decorating technique done in various parts of India but most closely associated with the southeastern Coromandel coastal region. The word literally means “pen-work,” and, in the traditional process, the designs, from the first outline to the colors, are drawn by hand. While this sounds simple, *kalamkari*—especially for an intricately patterned, multicolored, and gilded piece such as this—is immensely complex and involves multiple steps to prepare the cloth, create the design, and then dye each color separately.

After the hand-spun and hand-woven cloth is bleached using cow dung, it is washed, stiffened with a starch of buffalo milk, and dried. Next the red and darkest colors (black, purple) are painted on using mordant, a metallic oxide that allows the dye to bond with the cloth. To bring out the colors, the cloth is placed in a bath of alizarin, a plant-based red originally made of madder root. Only the places painted with the mordant accept the alizarin, so when the cloth is washed, the rest remains white.

Next a different technique is used—batik. Wax is painted over the textile’s surface except

where the artist wishes it to be blue. The cloth is then dyed with indigo, a plant-based pigment that creates a number of shades of blue. When the wax is scraped away, the remaining light areas are painted in by hand. Finally, a glue-like substance is delicately painted wherever the artist wants gold. He then applies thin gold sheets that stick only to the gummed areas.

Use and Regional Style

While the large square painted *pichhwai* clearly was intended to hang on a wall behind a *swarupa*, the use for this narrower piece, especially with its angled top, requires some consideration.

The top shows a prominent divine image; likewise, the lower portions show Krishna above a detailed scene of one of the sect’s primary festivals. But the main field of *botehs* on an indigo ground is generally plain, gilded only in its bottom rows. What might have been the use for this unusual composition? While many paintings show narrow hangings behind a *swarupa* but in front of a large *pichhwai*, they appear to fall fully flat against the wall.⁵⁸ One possibility is that it backed and hung over the throne of a smaller icon, perhaps one of the different forms of Krishna placed to the side of a large *swarupa* or a smaller *swarupa* such as Brijnathji of Kota. The top would project above the image; the plain section of the central field would be hidden behind and below it, with the gold *botehs* projecting on the horizontal plane in front; the elaborate lower rows would drape over and fall in front of the base where devotees could easily view their details.

Recent scholarship makes it clear that this precise form of *kalamkari* textile is known to come from a group of towns in the Machilipatnam region of Andhra Pradesh along the Coromandel Coast.⁵⁹ Machilipatnam was an ancient port town and a center for the production and export of such cloths to buyers around the world, from Indonesia to England. Pushtimarg pieces appear to have been commissioned specifically by members of wealthy merchant families that moved from Gujarat to Hyderabad in the early seventeenth century.

While there is enough variety in known Pushtimarg *kalamkari* cloths to indicate that more than one workshop produced them, this piece is of a type so closely related in technique, drawing, and composition to a few complete and fragmentary examples in public and private collections that there is little doubt they emerged from the same workshop. One such example is a complete but smaller and square *pichhwai* in the TAPI Textile Collection in Surat, Gujarat, dated to the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Virtually identical in its



depictions and technique to the Stern piece, it has a scene of the Annakuta festival below and the same image of the flute-playing Krishna with the *gopis* in Vrindavan above. It also has a similar, although narrower, field of gilded *botehs* and the very same green floral divider. However, instead of the upper pointed projection and surrounding vignettes, it is rectangular with a wide floral border on a white ground. In their superb 2007 publication, Kalyan Krishna and Kay Talwar, together with the TAPI research team, speculate that the “twin focus” on Gopalaji and Annakuta make it likely that the TAPI *pichhwai* was used for more than one occasion.⁶¹ They also state that its small size (only 38 × 43 inches [96.5 × 109.2 cm]) indicates it was intended for a home shrine. However, the Stern example, along with several other closely related fragments, may instead imply that all were part of an extensive—and expensive—regalia for a single shrine.



NOTES

1. H. Peter Stern, *The Creation of the Storm King Art Center: A Personal History; Transcript of a Lecture Given at the Chautauqua Institution, July 1, 2003* (Mountainville, NY: Storm King Art Center, 2008), p. 3.
2. At the time of Stern's birth, his father owned the largest oil business in Germany, soon sold to Shell. For more on his life, see *ibid.*; and Christopher Reed, "Storm King," *Harvard Magazine*, July 1999, <http://harvardmagazine.com/1999/07/storm.html>.
3. After graduating from Columbia, he published a historical study, *The Struggle for Poland* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1953).
4. Ralph Ogden was the father of Stern's first wife, Joan. Stern met Joan in Salzburg, Austria, in 1951; they would later have three children—Lisa, Beatrice, and John.
5. Joan Ogden Stern, quoted in "The Legacy of Ralph Ogden," *News from Cornwall and Cornwall-on-Hudson*, September 2, 2010, <http://www.cornwall-on-hudson.com/business.cfm?page=6127>. Ogden's only son, John, died at age eighteen in an automobile crash in 1946. That same year, when Stern was eighteen, his father, Otto, died in an airplane crash.
6. The World Monuments Fund is a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving artistic treasures around the world. Stern served on its board of trustees for forty years, most of that time as vice chairman.
7. The Stern Collection also includes a number of other fragments of rare and related Pushtimarg *kalamkari pichhwais*.
8. The *pichhwai* is illustrated in the exhibition's accompanying catalogue. See Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and Culture, 1300–1900*, exh. cat. (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1985), pp. 382–83, no. 260.
9. See, for example, Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 vols. (1946; repr., Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976); *Unknown India: Ritual Art in Tribe and Village*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: The Museum, 1968); and *Manifestations of Shiva*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1981). In addition to her interest in Indian art, Kramrisch also exhibited, collected, and published extensively on the arts of Nepal and Tibet.
10. Laurance Wieder, "The Gallery: Helen Drutt," *American Craft*, vol. 31, no. 4 (August–September 1979), p. 31.
11. Drutt English's late husband, Maurice English, published Barbara Stoler Miller's *Exploring India's Sacred Art: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch* (1983), while head of the University of Pennsylvania Press.
12. There is a relatively large bibliography on *pichhwais* and Pushtimarg (see the selected bibliography in this publication), including the Art Institute of Chicago's recent exhibition catalogue (see Madhuvanti Ghose, ed., *Gates of the Lord: The Tradition of Krishna Paintings*, exh. cat. [Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 2015]). For this reason, this publication merely introduces the larger subject while focusing on the two exquisite *pichhwais* given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art by H. Peter Stern.
13. The information in this section has been drawn from Richard Barz, *The Bhakti Sect of Vallabhacharya* (Faridabad, India: Thomson Press, 1976), esp. pp. 17, 19, 22, 24, 25, 28; and Amit Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji: Rajasthani Paintings from Nathdwara* (Ahmedabad, India: Mapin, 1987), esp. pp. 49–52.
14. According to Richard Barz (*Bhakti Sect*, p. 25), Krishna appeared in a dream to Vallabhacharya's father alone.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
16. The name Shrinathji is perhaps a shortened form of "Shri Govardhananathji." "Shri" is a name for Lakshmi, Goddess of Wealth, who is regarded as the consort of Vishnu. Therefore, "Shri-nath" could also be translated as "Lord of Lakshmi," which refers to Vishnu. We would like to thank Emilia Bachrach, visiting assistant professor at Elon University, Elon, NC, for her assistance with this translation.
17. The information on Pushtimarg *swarupas* in this section is based on Peter Bennett, "In Nanda Baba's House: The Devotional Experience in Pushti Marg Temples," in *Divine Passions: The Social Construction of Emotion in India*, ed. Owen M. Lynch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 182–211; and Norbert Peabody, *Hindu Kingship and Polity in Precolonial India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 60–61.
18. The information in this section has largely been drawn from Barz, *Bhakti Sect*, pp. 47–49.
19. Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 45.
20. Anita B. Shah, "Devotion and Patronage: The Story of a Pushtimarg Family," in Ghose, *Gates of the Lord*, p. 46.
21. Peabody, *Hindu Kingship*, p. 62.
22. According to Norbert Peabody (*ibid.*), Vitthalnath organized the festival in 1588. Woodman Lyon Taylor, however, gives the date as 1581. See Taylor, "Visual Culture in Performative Practice: The Aesthetics, Politics and Poetics of Visuality in Liturgical Practices of the Vallabha Sampradaya Hindu Community at Kota," PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1997, p. 44.
23. Chappan means "fifty-six"; *bhoga* translates to "enjoyment."
24. Peabody, *Hindu Kingship*, p. 62.
25. Taylor, "Visual Culture," pp. 47–48.
26. On the movements of Shrinathji, see Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, pp. 51–52.
27. The movements of the nine original *swarupas*, including their current locations, are discussed in Madhuvanti Ghose, "Introduction: Nathdwara: A Personal Journey," in Ghose, *Gates of the Lord*, pp. 16, 16n17.
28. As indicated in Shah, "Devotion and Patronage," p. 52.
29. There are several replaced and painted patches as well as some overpainting on sections of this *pichhwai*, showing that it was damaged and repaired during its history. This care indicates the precious nature of the piece. Sara Reiter, textile conservator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, examined the piece to identify the multiple cut-out sections of fabric into which patches were inserted and then painted (these patches do not seem to be of recent origin). Beth A. Price and Kate I. Duffy, research scientists at the Museum, performed Fourier transform infrared microspectroscopy (FTIR), scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive spectroscopy (SEM-EDS), and x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF) on numerous samples to identify pigments and to begin to understand the complex chronology of the textile's repairs. The team intends to continue research on this fascinating work to discover more about its history of transformation.
30. An image of the sun with a frontal face, such as that seen here, is a common emblem of various Rajput clans considered to be descendants of the sun. Although best known in connection to the Mewar dynasty of present-day Udaipur, the solar emblem also was used by the Rathore dynasties, whose kingdoms covered much of the northern part of Rajasthan. Here the Pushtimarg *tilak* on the sun's forehead emphasizes the religious devotion of the royal patron.
31. The entire leafy section of the central tree has been cut out from the original fabric and replaced with a newer, painted patch. Analysis of the green paint of the leaves revealed a mixture of the pigments chrome yellow (which dates from the early nineteenth century) and Prussian blue (first made around 1704), known as chrome green. Barium sulfate also is present. As a natural mineral and pigment, it may be an artifact of the chrome-green manufacturing process, or it may indicate lithopone pigment (patented in 1874), a barium sulfate and zinc sulfide copigment (zinc was detected). If present, lithopone would push the earliest possible date for the repairs to the late nineteenth century. On these pigments, see Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout, *Painting Materials: A Short Encyclopedia* (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), pp. 105–6, 125. The paints on the *pichhwai* were analyzed by selectively using MFTIR, SEM-EDS, and XRF. For MFTIR, samples were mounted on a Spectra-Tech diamond window. Analyses were performed in transmission mode between 4000 and 600 cm⁻¹ at 4 cm⁻¹ resolution and 200 scans per spectrum, using a Thermo Nicolet Continuum microscope (MCT-A detector) attached to a Thermo Nicolet Nexus 670 spectrometer and Omnic software. For SEM-EDS, microscopic size samples were mounted on an aluminum stub with carbon tape and carbon coated using a Denton Desk II coater. EDS data were collected using a JEOL 6460LV SEM with an Oxford INCA X-sight EDS detector (20 kV accelerating voltage) and INCA Energy 200 software. For XRF, in-situ sites were analyzed with a Bruker Tracer III-SD handheld XRF spectrometer equipped with an Rh tube, an SDD detector, and pXRF software. Instrument settings were 40kV, 11.2µA, and 90s.
32. Whether the original painting included a blooming *kadamba* at its center is unknown due to the *pichhwai*'s repairs, but it is extremely likely.
33. The leaf sections as well as some of the fruits of both mango trees have been cut out and repaired with sections of painted cloth; however, below the leafy sections hang enough mango fruits painted on the original cloth to confirm that both trees were indeed of this species. On the repaired sections, the green pigment used for the mango leaves is chrome green, as described in note 31, above. The pigments on the mango fruits, both on original and inserted cloth, were characterized as red/orange lead and orpiment/realgar, respectively, by SEM-EDS; these pigments have a long history of use and their presence does not aid in dating the repairs.
34. For the Pushtimarg names of Krishna, see the list in Kalyan Krishna and Kay Talwar, *In Adoration of Krishna: Pichhwais of Shrinathji*, exh. cat. (Surat, India: Garden Silk Mills, 2007), p. 106.
35. All the *gopis* seem to have had some repairs, primarily in the form of overpainting, although there are also a few cut-out patches. The precise layering of these repairs is part of ongoing research. The two outermost *gopis* seem to have the least amount of repair.
36. In general, Pushtimarg imagery depicts *gopis* as courtly women. Amit Ambalal has discussed the long-standing close political and religious relationship between Nathdwara and the Rathore kingdom of Kishangarh in northern Rajasthan. He speculates that the

courtly dress in which *gopis* are depicted in Nathdwara painting may be the result of local painters seeing Kishangarh works in the early eighteenth century, emphasizing the intertwining of artists and court workshops. See Ambalal, "The *Tilkayats* as Patrons: History and Painting in Nathdwara," in Ghose, *Gates of the Lord*, pp. 27–29. Of course, Nathdwara painters had access to works from many other Rajput courts, especially Kota and nearby Mewar, as well as from the Mughals.

37. Also called *chanias* in western India, *ghaghras* have more gathered fabric than narrower *lenghas*. The patterning could be meant to represent brocade or block-printed gold leaf, a traditional Rajasthani craft.

38. This type of long scarf is more commonly called a *dupatta* across India.

39. Although they appear to be white floral garlands, they may instead represent food offerings covered in cloth to keep out flies.

40. Note, however, that in this *pichhwai* both *morchhals*, like the green leaves of the trees above, consist of replacement patches containing nineteenth-century pigment (see note 31, above). Other locations where such patches appear are in the green underskirts of the two *chauri*-bearing *gopis*. A possible cause for these replacements is the use of a copper-containing pigment that may have degraded the fabric. See the section on "Technique and Materials" (p. 20) in this publication for further discussion.

41. According to Amit Ambalal (*Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 154), a *goswami* (priest) holds a *morchhal*, referred to as either a whisk or fan, over Shrinathji during *aarti* (the offering of light) to defend the seven-year-old god from the evil eye, from which children in particular require protection.

42. Silver, chlorine, and sulfur were detected in the river and the figures' garments by XRF and SEM-EDS. Taken together these three elements suggest the presence of silver chloride and silver sulfide corrosion products, which may have discolored and obscured the original silver.

43. Analysis of the paints suggested proteinaceous binder, minor localized plant- and/or insect-based wax, and the following pigments or fillers: indigo, Indian yellow, orpiment/realgar, red/orange lead, an organic red with aluminum substrate, lead white (neutral and basic), calcite, kaolinite, and talc. In addition to these pigments, which have a long history of use in India, other elements indicative of pigments first appearing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were detected in discrete areas of the painting. Dating implications for these pigments and analysis details are discussed in note 31, above.

44. The presence of gold and silver was confirmed by XRF and SEM-EDS.

45. Gerhard Banik and Johann Ponahlo, "Some Aspects of Degradation Phenomena of Paper Caused by Green Copper-Containing Pigments," *Paper Conservator*, vol. 7, no. 1 (1982), pp. 3–7.

46. See notes 31, 40, above.

47. Welch, *India*, pp. 382–83.

48. Along with the previously referenced works by Amit Ambalal, Madhuvanti Ghose, Kalyan Krishna, and Kay Talwar, major work on the Nathdwara painting lineage has been done by Tryna Lyons, and work on the general Mewar region by Shridhar Andhare and Andrew Topsfield. Lyons, *The Artists of Nathdwara: The Practice of Painting in Rajasthan* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004); Andhare, *Chronology of Mewar Paintings* (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan), 1987; and Topsfield, *Court Painting at Udaipur: Art under the Patronage of the Maharanas of Mewar* (Ascona, Switzerland: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2001).

49. See, among others, Molly Emma Aitkin, *The Intelligence of Tradition in Rajput Court Painting* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), which lays a theoretical groundwork for the pervasiveness of the cross-pollination of ateliers in Rajasthan; Lyons, *Artists of Nathdwara*; B. N. Goswamy and Eberhard Fischer, *Pahari Masters: Court Painters of Northern India* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 1992), which shows the fluidity of painters' patronage; Milo C. Beach, Eberhard Fischer, and B. N. Goswamy, eds., *Masters of Indian Painting*, exh. cat. (Zurich: Artibus Asiae Publishers, 2011); Navina Haidar, "The Kishangarh School of Painting, c. 1680–1850," PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1995; Rosemary Crill, *Marwar Painting: A History of the Jodhpur Style* (Bombay: India Book House, 1999); and Deborah Diamond, Catherine Glynn, and Karni Singh Jasol, *Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 2008).

50. Ambalal, "Tilkayats," pp. 27–29, 28nn9–10.

51. Amit Ambalal has discussed two important gifts of Kishangarh *pichhwais* to the Shrinathji shrine at Nathdwara: a partial *pichhwai* of the Sharad Purnima harvest festival in the collection of English artist Howard Hodgkin (born 1932), which has been dated to 1720–25; and a

second piece in the Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery in Vadodara, India, that has been dated to c. 1770. See *ibid.*, p. 28, figs. 3, 4. Unlike the Stern piece, the Hodgkin partial *pichhwai* was intentionally made in two halves to flank Nathdwara's Shrinathji.

52. Neither a Bikaner nor a Jodhpur origin is likely for this *pichhwai* due to the differences in facial and body features as well as the ongoing importance of Pushtimarg for Kishangarh, among other reasons. Stylistically, Jodhpur figures tend to be squatter and more angular than these, while Bikaner figures often exhibit shading under the chins and below the eyes.

53. See note 49, above.

54. Ghose, "Introduction," p. 18. See also Lyons, *Artists of Nathdwara*. As a final note on region, the format of the *gopis* honoring a central *kadamba* tree (without Krishna in its branches) is found especially frequently in *pichhwais* that scholars now attribute to Hyderabad in the Deccan and less frequently in works from other parts of India. In these Deccani *pichhwais*, however, the *kadamba* tree is invariably in bloom, covered in small yellow-orange flowers. Why the Stern painted work shows a tree not in bloom may be due to the fact that the foliage is all later repair or to a different regional iconography.

55. Shrinathji's clothing in general was adopted from sixteenth-century Mughal prototypes. See Ambalal, *Krishna as Shrinathji*, p. 48; and Ghose, "Introduction," p. 16.

56. On the *lal-darwaza*, see Rajendra Jindal, *Culture of a Sacred Town: A Sociological Study of Nathdwara* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1976), pp. 48ff.

57. See Amit Ojha's short film on the Annakuta festival. Ojha, *Tribal Privilege*, Folklore Productions, 5:01, posted on YouTube July 5, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YjjdOVKHrwo>.

58. See, for example, *A Lotus Pichvai Displayed in the Shrine, Nathdwara, mid-nineteenth century* (Amit Ambalal Collection), illustrated in Ghose, *Gates of the Lord*, p. 96, fig. 1.

59. Shah, "Devotion and Patronage," pp. 42–53. Kalyan Krishna and Kay Talwar note that none of the examples is inscribed with regional designations or dates. See Krishna and Talwar, "Pichhwais for Krishna the Beloved: Devotional Hangings from the Deccan and South India," in Krishna and Talwar, *In Adoration of Krishna*, pp. 108–9.

60. See TAPI Research Team, "Catalogue: Deccani and South Indian Pichhwais," in Krishna and Talwar, *In Adoration of Krishna*, pp. 116–21, no. 31.

61. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

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